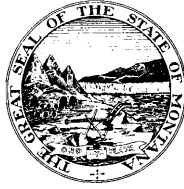


OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

BRIAN SCHWEITZER  
GOVERNOR



JOHN BOHLINGER  
LT. GOVERNOR

January 28, 2008

Via Electronic Filing

Chairman Kevin Martin  
Commissioner Michael J. Copps  
Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein  
Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate  
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell

Ms. Marlene Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
455 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Universal Service (CC Docket No. 96-45); DA 07-4719  
Initiation of a Proceeding to Consider a Petition to Redefine Certain Rural  
Telephone Company Service Areas in the State of Montana

Dear Chairman, Commissioners, and Ms. Dortch:

I am pleased to write in support of a pending petition before the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that involves a small, rural wireless telecommunications provider in Montana, Triangle Communication System, Inc. (TCS).

I respectfully urge you to concur with the two previous decisions (Orders 6723a and 6723b, Docket D2004.1.6) of the Montana Public Service Commission (MPSC) affirming that it is in the public interest to grant TCS's petition to redefine the service areas of certain rural incumbent local exchange carriers in Montana for purposes of its designation as an eligible telecommunications carrier. The telephone exchanges identified for redefinition are Chinook, Turner, Hays, Whitewater, South Malta, Chester, Dodson, Harlem and Malta. These are extremely rural, sparsely populated areas of Montana.

My administration has recognized the vital importance of wireless telecommunications to our rural communities. During the 2007 Legislative Session, we proposed tax incentives for wireless providers to expand service into rural areas of Montana and to construct new towers to extend wireless coverage. Although the proposal was voted down, this issue continues to be of vital importance to rural Montana. We recognize that without funding assistance, it may be years before wireless communications is extended to rural areas in our State.

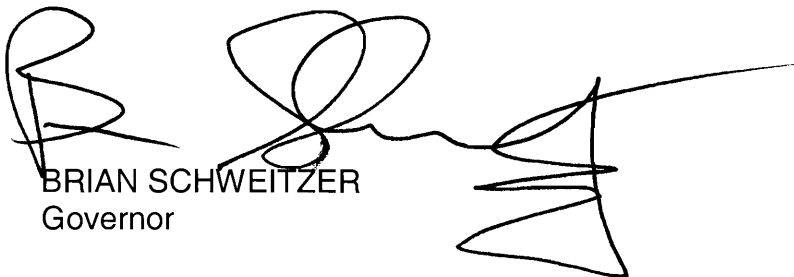
Federal Communications Commission  
CC Docket No. 96-45: DA 07-4719  
January 28, 2008  
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Wireless telecommunications is no longer a luxury in our society; it is a fundamental necessity. Along its northern border, Montana shares many isolated, remote miles with Canada. Access to wireless telecommunications is vital to homeland security. Law enforcement officers need dependable wireless service. Drivers and agricultural workers need to be able to rely on wireless service in the event of an accident along the back roads of rural Montana. Schoolchildren travel daily on remote rural roads. Moreover, in terms of economic development, cellular coverage is absolutely paramount to bringing new business into the area and to sustaining our small towns and communities.

Rural consumers must have access to universal telecommunications service that is comparable to that provided to urban consumers. The MPSC has already conducted a lengthy and thorough review of the TCS petition with all parties having had a full opportunity to advocate their positions. The MPSC has determined that the TCS's request for redefinition and ETC designation is in the public interest.

I urge you to concur with the decisions of the Montana Public Service Commission in the TCS proceedings.

Sincerely,



BRIAN SCHWEITZER  
Governor